At the end of heavy breathing
the funerals of my brothers
force me to wear
this scratchy black suit.
I should be naked,
seeding their graves.
I go to the place
where the good feelin' awaits me
self-destruction in my hand,
kneeling over a fucking toilet,
splattering my insides
in a stinking, shit-stained bowl.
I reduce loneliness to cheap green rum,
spicy chicken, glittering vomit.
I go to the place
where danger awaits me,
cake-walking
a precarious curb
on a corner
where the absence of doo wop
is frightening.
The evidence of war
and extinction surround me.
I wanted to stay warm
at the bar,
play to the mischief,
the danger beneath a mustache.
The drag queen's perfume
lingers in my sweater
long after she dances
out of the low-rent light,
the cheap shots and catcalls
that demean bravery.

And though the room
is a little cold and shabby,

the music grating,
the drinks a little weak,
we are here
witnessing the popular one
in every boy's town.
A diva by design.
Giving us silicone titties
and dramatic lip synch.
We're crotch to ass,
shoulder to shoulder,
buddy to buddy,
squeezed in sleaze.
We want her to work us.
We throw money
at her feet.
We want her
to work us,
let us see
the naked ass of truth.
We whistle for it,
applaud, shout vulgarities.
We dance like beasts
near the edge of light,
choking drinks.
Clutching money.
And here I am,
flying high
without ever leaving the ground
three rums firing me up.
The floor swirling.
Music thumping at my temple.
In the morning
I'll be all right.
I know I'm hooked on the boy
who makes slaves out of men.

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